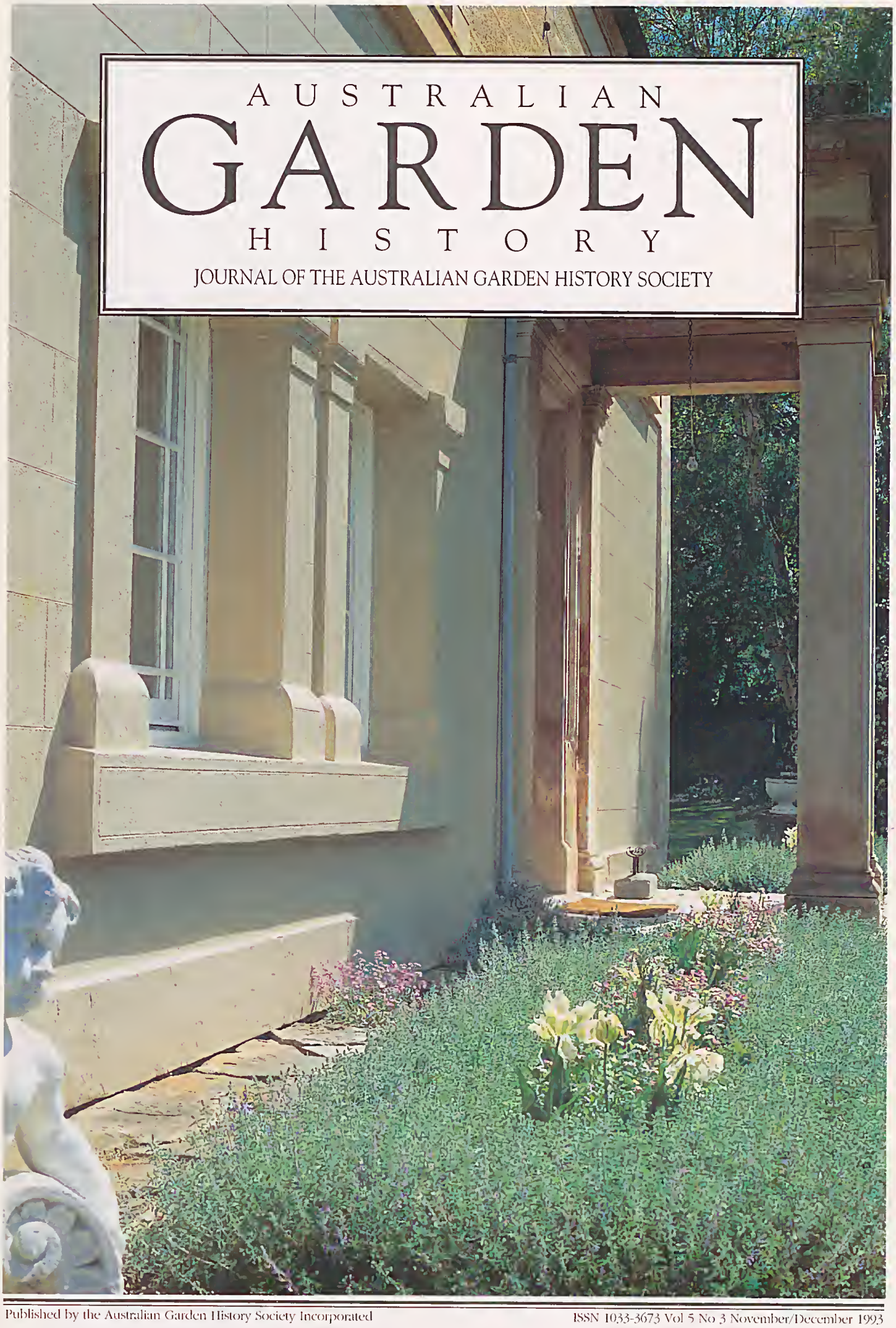
AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY

JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GARDEN HISTORY SOCIETY



Trisha Dixon

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Nicola Downer gardens in the Adelaide Hills and is a member of the South Australian Branch committee.

Cover: Wentworth House at Bothwell, one of the villages visited as part of the Fourteenth Annual Conference (see article on page 12).

National News

Annual General Meeting

The thirteenth annual general meeting of the Australian Garden History Society took place at the Sheraton Hotel, Hobart, on Saturday, 16 October 1993.

Chairman Margaret Darling welcomed a large contingent of members and the formal part of the business was concluded in time for an early morning tea! Peter Watts had withdrawn his nomination to the National Management Committee due to work commitments and so Margaret Darling and Fairie Nielsen were duly elected unopposed. Peter's pivotal role in the establishment and consolidation of the AGHS was highlighted and his kind offer to assist the National Management Committee, even though not an elected member, was noted with thanks. This meeting also marked the departure of state representatives Victor Crittenden (ACT) and Robin Jeffcoat (NSW). The committee extends their thanks to Victor and Robin for their input to the running of the Society over the past few years.

For the benefit of members, the following is a list of the National Management Committee for 1993-94.

ELECTED MEMBERS

Margaret Darling	Lester Tropman
Robin Lewarne	Richard Aitken
Trisha Dixon	Pat English
Fairie Nielsen	Olive Royds

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New South Wales	Sally Weedon
Queensland	Jan Seto
South Australia	Audrey Abbie
Tasmania	Ann Cripps
Victoria	Sue Keon-Cohen
Western Australia	John Viska

Correction

The photo credits on pages 8 and 9 of volume 4, number 5, March/April 1993 should read 'Copy of original held by Hon. Michael Clarke *in* La Trobe Collection, State Library of Victoria'.

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The Australian Garden History Society was formed in 1980 to bring together those with an interest in the various aspects of garden history—horticulture, landscape design, architecture and related subjects. Its prime concern is to promote interest and research into historic gardens as a major component of the National Estate. It aims to look at garden making in a wide historic, literary, artistic and scientific context.

The editorial content of articles, or the products and services advertised in this journal, do not necessarily imply their endorsement by the Australian Garden History Society.

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Flag of Beauty

Rejuvenating Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne, has been acclaimed as one of the outstanding gardens of the world, treasured by the citizens of Australia, and visitors from overseas, who go there to seek refreshment for the eyes, mind and spirit – its tranquillity providing a sanctuary from the busy world outside.

The temperate climate which Melbourne possesses makes it possible to grow a wide variety of plants, from tall trees, to shrubs and small annuals, which reflect their diverse geographical origins.

For a botanic garden to fulfil its destiny its aims need to be two-fold, and this botanic garden surely meets those requirements. Firstly, it contains a vast reservoir of scientific information for the botanist, and secondly, within lies the inspiration needed by the horticulturalist and gardener to satisfy their individual aesthetic aims in pursuit of their ideals of beauty.

> Whenever you visit this historic garden nature speaks eloquently to each one of us in diverse ways, evoking a variety of responses

Whenever you visit this historic garden nature speaks eloquently to each one of us in diverse ways, evoking a variety of responses. In winter I enjoy seeing the deciduous trees, albeit bereft of leaves, their tracery forming beautiful patterns in the sky, in contrast with the native and exotic evergreen trees. However it is they which give the landscape scenery such strength of form in winter, the harmonising effect of which might have otherwise have been lost.

As I write it is early spring, and during visits there, when gazing at the tiny emerging leaves of the deciduous trees, on the threshold of their of their metamorphosis, it never ceases to be cause for wonder at their miraculous unfolding. Listening to the music of the birds – now their spring song becomes linked phrases of joyous notes – and so to wonder is added delight for the ears.

In early summer, with its almost overwhelming profusion of leaves and flowers when trees, who once were bare of leaves, now cast a welcome shade, inviting a pause beneath for quiet moments of thought. In autumn, on those magical days when not a leaf stirs, and many transformed from green to gold and red – and when so often wreathed in mist elegiac quality pervades the scene; the sight of such beauty gives reason for a more reflective mood, that nature is completing its orbit for the year – albeit not an end, for it is demonstrating its cycle of decay and renewal.

So with such a paradise in our midst it has been a matter of great regret that these gardens, in the last ten years or so, have not been so fortunate as have other tourist attractions and sporting bodies. Their budget did not keep pace with the work which is necessary to make the improvements that are urgently needed to ensure that their beauty will not suffer a decline.

Fortunately, due to many reasons, the situation has changed; the people who have worked so conscientiously during that period can now take heart. The improvements, which are planned for the next decade, will ensure that the desired standard of maintenance and the necessary refurbishment should be achieved.

The appointment of the new Director, Dr Philip Moors, PhD BSc nine months ago, was of special importance. The launching of the *Herald-Sun* Gardens Revitalisation Appeal of February and March 1992 was an event which could be described as a watershed for the Royal Botanic Gardens. The Appeal was chaired by Sir Rupert Hamer and raised $450,000. Furthermore the publicity it gave, in highlighting the problems, spurred the community into action, whose practical support had been previously lacking.

Another important event was the appointment of a seven member Board, of which William Irvine is Chairman, who took over responsibility on 1 July 1992 for the Royal Botanic Gardens, the National Herbarium of Victoria, the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens and the gardens of Government House. They have taken up office in an atmosphere of forward movement, at the time of strong public interest. The budget still comes largely from the State Government, as before, but now that the Gardens are governed by a statutory body there can be more independence.

Dr Moors and the members of the Board face considerable challenges, as many of the trees, which were an integral part of Guilfoyle's grand vision, have reached an advanced stage in their in their life-span. Naturally this a matter of concern, not only for their appearance and health, but one of safety for the general public.

Their replacement needs to be very carefully considered if the exceptional beauty of the perspectives, prospects, vistas and panoramas, that lie within, still retain their definition – their lines not blurred – and that mastery of landscape design by Guilfoyle preserved for future generations.

Another step forward will be the preparation of a master plan to provide a 'big picture' as a guide for the rejuvenation of Guilfoyle's creations. This considerable work will take a year or two to complete. It has started with a survey of all the five thousand trees (planted or self-sown), their identification and their condition. Dr Moors trusts this appraisal will convey a vision with which everybody will feel comfortable. When completed it will be the first comprehensive master plan ever undertaken of the Royal Botanic Gardens.

The outcome of significant donations, including those in the *Herald-Sun* Appeal is becoming apparent in the form of new plantings and other practical improvements, at this early date. The generosity of Dame Elisabeth Murdoch contributed to the creation of a Californian garden on the eastern boundary. This will demonstrate, when fully established, those plants which are suitable for our climate, which is similar to that part of America in many respects; in

National Trust of Australia (Victoria)

Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens, looking over Guilfoyle's masterpiece, the main lake

doing so will provide practical guidance as our requirement to save water is becoming more and more necessary. Complementary to this is a fully sponsored gift from Melbourne Water to establish an area of xerophytic plants, which, it is hoped, will be opened in early summer.

An anonymous gift will add further interest, in time, to those majestic rainforest trees which are growing in part of the southern border. They will provide a framework for a further planting of seven rainforest habitat groups, ranging from cool temperate rainforests in southern Tasmania, to others in Victoria, New South Wales, and north to Cape York. Boral Ltd has also made a significant donation in resurfacing many of the paths in the gardens.

Pacific Dunlop Ltd, to mark the centenary of the Company, have made a wonderful gesture in promising 2.2 million dollars, to be spread over ten years. Each of the first three years will be allotted $500,000 and the balance, in equal portions, over the remainder. This is the largest single donation received by the Gardens.

The first of the three Pacific Dunlop projects will be to construct a new visitors centre, incorporating the lodge at F gate – which was its original function. This refurbished lodge, plus an addition, will contain an information area, a book shop and education facilities.

The second will be the restoration of what has been in past times, the Director's house. This charming residence, situated in its own secluded grounds, was home for successive Directors from 1856 until 1991. This is planned to be used as a headquarters for interest groups – The Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens, the Voluntary Guides, the Australian Garden History Society and the Ornamental Plant Collections Association.

The third project will be of great benefit to the National Herbarium whose research needs have suffered. A fund has been set up to finance a three-year post-doctoral research fellowship, to be named after the company. This will enable a young graduate to work there for three years, providing salary and equipment, which will further the work being carried out on the systematic relationship of our native flora.

Dr Moors and the members of the Board face considerable challenges, as many of the trees, which were an integral part of Guilfoyle's grand vision, have reached an advanced stage in their in their life-span

On visiting the Gardens at this time, you will notice extensive work in progress of the installation of a computerised watering system encompassing lawns and beds. This long overdue automation has been made possible by a special grant by the Victorian government. Pacific Dunlop has donated the electric cabling, L R Nelson Corporation have provided irrigation equipment, some free of charge, the remainder at a discount. Melbourne Water has assisted with the provision of water reticulation equipment. This will be the largest, and most complex, garden watering system in Australia and it is hoped it will be finished by

Warren Worboys, Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne

The view from the newly constructed Trig Point Lookout at the Cranbourne Botanic Garden, looking across the Australia Garden to the distant ranges

March 1994. Sixteen separate computer 'satellites' will govern sub-sections and sensors to monitor soil moisture so that the water delivered to each small section will be attuned to the needs of the flora therein. This will effect a huge saving in water consumption and will release the labour required in summer in moving hoses for other work in the Gardens. The system will operate between 10 pm and 6 am at time when transpiration is less and causing the least discomfiture to visitors.

> The tending of these gardens calls for many talents – the visionary as the planner – the doctor or surgeon as the healer – the nurse as the watcher and tenderer – and the planter who sows the seed

However the challenges associated with installation have been considerable, due to the desire to cause the least damage to root-systems, particularly in the beds, which are knotted with roots and through which the pipes have to be laid.

Due to its distance from Melbourne there is a tendency in the community to forget that the Cranbourne Botanic Garden is part of the Royal Botanic Gardens. Now that all the land has been gradually acquired over the years, through the vision and work of the Maud Gibson Trust, a master plan will be commissioned by this Trust, for 1994. This will form a guide for the development of what, in time, will be a remarkable garden of native species from all over Australia.

The tending of these gardens calls for many talents – the visionary as the planner – the doctor or surgeon as the healer – the nurse as the watcher and tenderer – and the planter who sows the seed. Albeit of primary importance, that is not all that is needed; for those who enjoy its beauty, who are enchanted with songbirds within, thereby uplifted in spirit by its very nature, it is they who are needed to contribute the practical on-going support which is vital to its well-being. The generosity of the caring people who have so far provided this wonderful assistance, have set an example for all to follow, to make certain an unbroken chain of support is for those who labour so diligently in its welfare, so that their will not be in vain.

In conclusion, I would like to add a few lines, written by the late Sir George Trevelyan which, though applicable to any part of the earth where natural beauty is expressed and nurtured, what he had to say, I always like to think, is appropriate to our Royal Botanic Gardens:

> This flag of beauty, hung out by the mysterious Universe, to claim the worship of the heart of man, what is it, and what does its signal mean to us?
>
> Natural beauty is the ultimate spiritual appeal of the Universe, of nature, or of the God of nature, to their nursling man. It is the highest common denominator of the spiritual life of today.

Joan Law-Smith

Classical Symmetry versus Geraniums

Planting the Garden City at Yallourn

In a memo to the Victorian premier in December 1920, Sir John Monash sketched his vision for Yallourn, the town that would be built to house workers coming to mine the brown coal and staff the power stations to provide an electricity supply in Victoria.

> We have adopted the policy of housing such a population with the utmost regard to their comfort and social welfare, and to this end have embarked upon the design and planning of a garden town to be called 'Yallourn' (a combination of two native terms denoting 'brown fuel'). It is hoped that Yallourn…will be in every way an ideal town, laid out on hygienic and aesthetic principles, fully sewered, with a good water supply and with electric light.

The site for the new town was 120 kilometres from Melbourne, surrounded by extensive brown coal deposits in the valley of the Latrobe River. In 1918, the State Electricity Commission (SEC) had been formed and Sir John Monash, war hero and engineer, was appointed to direct the considerable undertaking of developing the open cut mine, constructing the power stations and building the transmission lines that would march throughout the state and provide it with electricity.

Monash wanted Yallourn to be a model town and was influenced by the garden city movement. He wanted a pleasant, aesthetic but well ordered town that would nestle under the impressive superstructure of the power station complex. He rejected private ownership within the town: it would be planned, administered and controlled by the SEC.

In 1921, Alan La Gerche was appointed to head the architectural sub-branch at the SEC with responsibility for planning the town and designing the houses and commercial buildings. The following year, while the first streets were being formed from the Stringybark and Messmate site, Hugh Linaker was appointed landscape gardener. Based at Mont Park, Linaker was landscape gardener to the Lunacy Department. He was asked to make regular visits to Yallourn and draw up plans for public areas and street plantings.

After his first visit to Yallourn in 1923, Linaker gave La Gerche his sketches for street planting and the open spaces at Yallourn. La Gerche found them disturbing and immediately reported his misgivings to Monash.

> I regret to say that some of his ideas directly conflict with the original proposals for the development of the Township. In the general design of Yallourn I have formed very definite ideas regarding the treatment of the various areas and I venture to submit that only chaos and confusion can result from any attempt to combine views mutually exclusive and destructive of one another.

Faced with the problem of defining the relationship

An early aerial photograph of Yallourn, showing the town's design

Yallourn Collection, Centre for Gippsland studies

Yallourn Collection, Centre for Gippsland

Town Gardens in the newly built town, Centreway looking towards Northway

between architect and landscape gardener, Monash drew on his involvement in choosing a design for the national war memorial. He decided the architect 'must be supreme over the ancillary artists who provide the detail'. Shortly afterwards, La Gerche and Linaker visited Yallourn together, where according to Linaker they 'got on splendidly'. Linaker drew up a list of species and the numbers of trees required for each of the streets (see table on page 10).

The plan for Yallourn was roughly triangular, with Railway Avenue forming the base. There was no main street. The town centre was planned around a square and gardens, from which streets to the residential area fanned. The town centre was linked to the railway station by a wide avenue called Broadway which was to be lined with trees and open spaces. Busy with street plantings and despatching batches of elms, planes and birches to the Yallourn nursery, Linaker finally turned his attention to Broadway. In 1925 he drew up a plan for the open spaces. As well as elms, it included a profusion of palms, cypresses and flower beds. La Gerche dismissed the plans coldly: no palms or flower beds in front of the shopping centre, only elms and grass. Linaker admitted in a pencilled note to the Secretary of the SEC that he was disappointed. 'Why all these alterations and where is it going to end?' More officially, he defended his plans.

> The absence of growth in Broadway must not be overlooked, also that elms are deciduous trees and will not show their true character for 10 to 15 years...The Phoenix Palms are to relieve the winter bareness and lighten the scheme. Golden Cupressus to enrich the general These colours harmonise and in association with the elms would in summertime present a rich combination.

Eventually, an avenue of planes instead of elms was planted. If Monash had been consulted, he may have overridden the architect. He was a keen gardener and partial to palms. After a visit to Yallourn in 1927, he sent a note to the general superintendent advocating more palms should be planted in private gardens and in public plantations. 'They are very decorative and contrast agreeably with other foliage.'

With the spring planting season for 1926 fast approaching, Monash was anxious for street planting to get underway. Linaker prepared a list for the August/September season. La Gerche approved the list, but sounded a note of caution. 'I would request', he wrote, 'that Mr Linaker be instructed that care should be taken not to freely mix the different species, as the effect envisaged cannot be obtained except by planting on broad and simple lines'. He did not allow some rose beds in the town square area to slip through. Planting the roses 'violates the simplicity of the design which is now in keeping with the treatment of Broadway as approved by the Commissioners'.

Yallourn began to take shape. Hundreds of shady street trees were planted along the new roads in front of recently erected houses. Residents were encouraged to develop their gardens and were supplied with plants and shrubs from the Yallourn nursery. Through a mixture of SEC support and voluntary labour, bowling greens were established, the churches and schools were landscaped and a golf course

was laid out. But Linaker continued to be dissatisfied with the way Broadway was developing. Soon after returning from a routine inspection of Yallourn in 1929, he expressed his disappointment in a report to the Secretary.

> This being the central section, in fact, the show place of Yallourn – I consider it should be made more attractive. To my mind it presents a thin appearance and lacks brightness and because the trees are deciduous, there is obviously bareness in the winter months. I would therefore strongly recommend planting Phoenix Palms and beds of scarlet geraniums, 3 feet six wide alternately, along both sides from end to end. This would prove in order and make Broadway a thing of beauty.

His next report recommended 'a nicely designed pergola', as well as more plantings of palms, cypresses and flower beds in front of the stores. La Gerche's response was terse. Palms and cypresses were not required and pergolas would present a 'homely appearance...The design of these areas require they be left as open as possible'.

Resident officials at Yallourn were called in to arbitrate on the matter. R.A. Dixon, the General Superintendent reported in a philosophical manner.

> Mr Linaker aims at brightness and beauty but the Architect insists that the treatment should be of rigid formality. Personally, I should like to see the pergolas covered with climbing roses and the plots in front of the store gay with flowers, as to my mind, flowers exercise a greater influence on people's lives than a formal treatment which excludes the element of beauty and which is as subject to as many changes of fashion as there are women's dress. Artistic treatment is like classical music in as much as both require education and training for their thorough appreciation. I therefore do not feel competent to advise which method is the more desirable but I am of the opinion that there would be a large majority of the people in Yallourn in favour of flowers even if they interfered with a classical symmetry of design.

La Gerche reluctantly agreed to the geraniums, but felt the need to explain his side further.

> The Civic Centre is designed to be treated as a PLACE, that is an open square unobstructed by anything that would at all interfere with the view across it from any position. This is fundamental and any violation of this motif would break up the simplicity of the place...
>
> In order to give Mr Linaker a clearer idea of what we are aiming at, I suggest the accompanying illustrated book showing the treatment of the streets and open places at Welwyn Garden City to be forwarded to him. This example is selected for him for, as I understand, some similarity between this successful site-planning enterprise and Yallourn has been observed by distinguished English visitors. If true this must be very gratifying as it will be readily conceded that the results contained in the English sample can hardly be improved upon and it will be seen how the charm of the various streets and open spaces depends entirely on the simplicity of the treatment.

As a resident of Yallourn, Dixon was aware of the local requirements for the town centre. During the 1920s, Yallourn

One of the first houses built at Yallourn, showing pre-existing trees forming instant gardens

Yallourn Collection, Centre for Gippsland

McGoldrick Collection

McGoldrick Collection

Two prize-winning home gardens at Yallourn

was not a country town serving its hinterland that buzzed on sale days when farming families came into town to buy and sell stock and shop. Yallourn was a closed SEC town, designed only to house and cater for SEC employees and their families. By day, the town centre was the preserve of women and children coming to shop at the SEC operated Yallourn General Store and visit the playground. Shade trees and pleasant flower beds would be appreciated by shoppers juggling groceries, toddlers and prams, and the shaded gardens would be an ideal place to sit with other shoppers and help alleviate the isolation many women experienced in their homes, and without extended families. Linaker and Dixon rejected La Gerche's impersonal approach.

It was left to Monash as chairman to adjudicate. He agreed on the 'open square' treatment but recommended *Acacia floribunda*, another suggestion of Linaker's, be planted along Broadway as a temporary measure until the plane trees were more mature.

After Linaker's visit to Yallourn in 1930, he reported 1,859 street trees had been planted at Yallourn and recommended another 344 be planted on residential streets. It was his report on the road to the power station that drew a scathing response from his adversary, La Gerche. Linaker reported that while the *Acacia floribunda* looked well, they were short-lived and required a more permanent avenue. He recommended planting poplars and Silky Oaks alternately between the existing acacias.

'I have previously pointed out', wrote La Gerche weightily, 'that authorities on the horticultural side of civic development are against mixing the varieties of trees in avenues, roads and streets. If any doubt should be raised on these matters it should be dispelled by reference to annexed extracts from works by eminent writers on the subject, to which Mr Linaker's attention might be drawn'. Included in his memorandum were extracts from *Shade Trees in Towns and Cities* by William Solotoroff, *Town Planning in Practice* by eminent garden city planner Raymond Unwin and *Practice of Civic Art* by Thomas Mawson, lecturer in landscape design at the University of Liverpool, all recommending uniformity in street trees. Only Silky Oaks were planted along the road to the Works.

When he returned to Melbourne after a visit to Yallourn in October 1931, Linaker reported that the majority of street planting was completed. 'The street trees generally are creditable and will ultimately be a wonderful feature at Yallourn', he wrote in 1932. La Gerche agreed. 'There is no doubt that the avenues are beginning to look well and that they will effect a material contribution towards the realisation of the Township design'.

But all the issues were revived in 1936 when the General Superintendent at Yallourn, R.A. Dixon, was keen to complete the town centre. There had been little development in the 1930s, but now that recovery from the depression was evident, the town centre could be completed, and the proposed theatre built. Dixon requested from La Gerche his plan of the town square, the area extending from Broadway and showing the location of buildings 'so that permanent plantings can be made'.

Permanent plantings? Once again La Gerche reiterated that the area should be treated as an open space, but he did agree to some flower beds. The area should be 'grassed, enlivened with flower beds, surrounded by buildings and a site for memorials such as that of the late Chairman. [Monash had died in 1931.] It is intended that the square should be of the form and nature as is continually being urged by City Councillors, town planners and others and similar in effect to the Civic Centres in the modern garden cities in England and America'.

Dixon accepted La Gerche's justification but as in 1929, he agreed with Linaker's view and preferred a more informal town square with colour and shade – 'a few handsome umbragious trees under which people using the park could sit in warm weather…would give more pleasure than merely open space'. He felt La Gerche's vision was too grand for Yallourn, the town did not have gracious buildings that would enhance an open square. 'The buildings which exist ', he explained, 'such as the Fire Brigade Hall, the National Bank etc. are not buildings on which the eye can rest with pleasure, and while the Health Centre, Post Office and the Savings Bank are quite satisfactory for the purposes for which they have been designed, they are not particularly attractive in appearance…I do not think Yallourn can in any way be compared with either Melbourne, Canberra or modern garden cities elsewhere'.

The issue of the town centre gradually faded as the work of Linaker and La Gerche drew to a close at the end of the 1930s and with the outbreak of war. The considerable expansion of the Latrobe Valley after the war made new demands on the town centre with an expanded shopping

complex that was no longer under the control of the SEC, car parking and a bus terminal. Except for the growing beauty of the street trees, the residential areas of Yallourn were little changed. The street trees became a feature of Yallourn, as Hugh Linaker had predicted. They were reaching their glowing maturity when the SEC announced in 1961 that the town would be demolished in order to mine the the coal that lay beneath it. In spite of a vigorous campaign fought by Yallourn residents, the town was inexorably swallowed by the open cut. 'It was the removal of Yallourn's trees that upset most people in the Valley', wrote Ted Hopkins in 1982 in his satirical *Yallourn Stories*. 'Nearly everyone was on the side of the trees.' Some were removed and planted in other Latrobe Valley towns, but the majority of the planes, elms, oaks, ash, poplars and birches were destroyed. The power stations still stand at Yallourn, but the open cut now marks the site of the model town and its splendid avenues.

Meredith Fletcher

References

Sources for this article are drawn from correspondence in the Yallourn Township general file, Y/ST, SEC Archives, Monash House, Melbourne.

List of Trees for Yallourn Streets, 16 June 1924

STREET	NAME OF TREE	NO REQUIRED
Railway Ave	Ulmus Montano	116
Northway & Southway	Plantanus 'Oriental Plane'	175
The Angles	Tamorix Gallica	160
East Cross	Pyrus Aucuparia	84
Green Street	Betula Alba	95
Ridgway	Populus Dilatata	136
Office Place	Quercus Cerrus	60
Park Way	Platanus 'Oriental Plane'	43
Garden Street	Betula Alba	62
Maiden Street	Pyrus Aucuparia	108
Hillside	Populus Monilifera	120
Reservoir Rd	Populus Dilatata	87
Maryvale Rd	Fraxinus Ornus	96
Lookout Rd	Fraxinus Excelsia	93

WISTARIA GARDENS, PARRAMATTA – A POSTSCRIPT

Following the recent article published in *Australian Garden History* (Vol 5 No 1), it seems improbable that much more could be said in so short a period of time. However there have been further developments both positive and negative, that warrant attention.

Perhaps it is better to begin with the 'bad' news. Funding was sought through the 1993 NSW Heritage Assistance Program to prepare a management plan for the Wistaria Gardens. The 'Friends of Wistaria Gardens and Cumberland Hospital' had won the battle for the preservation of the site and had been instrumental in the decision to develop a conservation plan. Unfortunately this is not enough! To ensure that further degradation is prevented necessitates the development of a management plan, however this was not regarded as urgent enough. Sadly, the potential for further damage exists, if (for example) a mature tree is lost – it will be many years before genuine 'replacement' occurs. One suspects that it is forgotten that gardens are in

Wistaria Gardens in full glory for the Wistaria Fete, c. 1960s

Cumberland Hospital Museum

David Beaver

Wistaria Gardens (1991) still retains its charm but many of the lost beds of plantings need to be replaced

fact living things not readily replaceable bricks and mortar!

Funding to maintain the gardens is drawn from the Cumberland Hospital budget and in these days of financial austerity, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the hospital grounds. The need to maintain health services necessarily takes precedence over everything else. The Friends believe that the development of a management plan would provide a timetable for maintenance and restoration, consequently it is hoped that through the voluntary assistance of garden experts, the management plan may yet be realised. The future maintenance of the garden will probably require the establishment of a volunteer group in much the same manner as Araluen near Perth (see *Gardening Australia*, October 1993) and hopefully expressions of interest will be called early in the new year.

The most positive development was the opening of the newly renovated Wistaria House during the 64th Annual Wistaria Fete in September. The house was refurbished to provide a 'coffee shop' venue for patients and their visitors, which can also be utilised by the public at various times of the year, eg. during the Wistaria Fete. The first floor now houses the Hospital Museum which preserves items of the past and outlines the hospital's history. At this time, the house is only open to the public during significant events, such as the Fete, Heritage and Foundation Weeks, and by arrangement with the hospital administration. The house will in future provide a focal point to visitors to the garden.

The Parramatta Regional Branch of the National Trust chose the house and gardens as the venue for its 'First Birthday' celebration on September 17th, with the gardens illuminated through the sponsorship of Prospect Electricity (the first corporate sponsorship of a Wistaria Gardens event). Not only did this provide a very successful evening for the Regional Branch, but also raised awareness, creating potential future supporters for the gardens.

The gardens for this year's Wistaria Fete were resplendent with tens of thousands of spring flowering annuals and bulbs with the Wisteria itself particularly magnificent due to the previous warm winter weather. Interestingly, one can readily identify new visitors to the gardens by their (sometimes) excessive admiration. For people who have known the gardens for more than ten years, the sad fact remains that, for the rest of the year, colour is generally absent due to the removal of perennial plants, eg hundreds of roses – maintenance costs are just too high! This should not discourage anyone who wishes to see the gardens as the landscape of lawns, stone retaining walls and trees throughout the grounds provide considerable beauty and interest in their own right (palm and pine fanciers always seem impressed).

The preservation of the gardens and the gardenesque landscapes dating back to the last century require public awareness of their existence, and to that end I would encourage informal visits to the hospital just to have a look. Groups can be accommodated by contacting the editor of this Journal.

Terry Smith

Impressions of the Fourteenth Annual National Conference of the Australian Garden History Society

After all the rush of packing and organising spouse and children who looked reproachfully when the departure day came, I looked at the garden and thought I should *not* be going to look at other people's gardens and listen to lectures on related topics, I should be staying here and weeding. Luckily the thought passed fairly quickly and it was with great excitement that I registered for the Fourteenth Annual National Conference of the Australian Garden History Society.

The opening ceremonies were followed by Lesley Gulson's talk on the Evolution of Villages and Cottage Garden using the Tasmanian example as the general model. It was extraordinary to discover the enormous numbers of villages publicly and privately planned which never filled their hoped-for potential.

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Our next experience was to embark on a series of three coaches, splendidly captained by Anne, Jenny and Mary Jean, which ferried us to our conference destinations – the first of which was the village of Richmond – a place which has cashed in not only on being a charming village but also on its variety of gardens, cottage and otherwise. Here we shared the first of our lunches, at the Richmond Town Hall, and renewed acquaintances, made new friends and generally lolled on the grass eating sandwiches and jelly slice.

Our evening began with the opening of a special exhibition held at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery 'From Village to Vase – the Art of a Cottage Garden', cleverly curated by Amanda Beresford and telling a tale of gardens mainly based on Tasmanian works.

The Saturday talks were an amazing collection. Richard Aitken of Victoria spoke on Government House in Hobart, Peter Cuffley described the development of the Australian cottage garden, Kim Fletcher explored herbs in the cottage garden while Norma McAuley dealt with colour in that same place. But we must give star billing to Ethne Clarke, the American Anglophile who showed us the English cottage garden growing from rotten row to royalty. She demonstrated the social and economic stories to be told in these gardens, with her not inconsiderable charm.

Later we visited the Government House garden and outbuildings and that evening we wended our way (tasting Mercury cider and Cascade beer en route at the pub in my case), to the Long Gallery in Salamanca Place for the

AGHS National Management Committee Secretary Lester Tropman, Executive Officer Jackie Courmadias and NMC member Trisha Dixon gloat in Bothwell Town Hall after the guard of the Uniting Church guild had slipped, disclosing a long cherished mayonnaise recipe

Victorian committee member Di Renon (right) finds fault with a garden at Hamilton, much to the embarrassment of her colleagues Linley Vellacott and Peter Cuffley

Tiring of cottage gardens, keynote speaker Ethne Clarke joins NMC members John Viska (Perth) and Trisha Dixon (Cooma) in the search for picturesque architecture in Richmond

Many delegates found roaming in packs to be a congenial way of devouring cottage gardens; here a Victorian gang is seen in the process of formation, led by Branch President Helen Page (left)

Tasmanian members join Mrs Nathy Hills (second from left) in a personally escorted tour of her delightful garden in Hamilton

Some of the Society's best minds bring their identification skills to bear on a mystery encalypt at Clifton Priory, Bothwell; from left, Sue Small (Hobart), John Viska (Perth), Peter Cuffley (Castlemaine) and Lester Tropman (Sydney)

annual dinner. The food was delicious and the company terrific but the highlight of the evening was surely Libby McNaughton's spectacular win at the Wrest Point Casino when in her excitement at winning $72 from a two dollar bet at roulette, she forgot to remove the original chip and won another $72. By the end of the conference stories were circulating to the effect she might not even manage to carry the money back to her home at Skipton in Victoria – so great was her win.

The Sunday visits to Hamilton and Bothwell proved to us that villages are a living and growing thing. At Bothwell our lunch at the Town Hall, provided by the Uniting Church congregation, was memorable. Later we strolled to the Anglican Church craft shop – two community groups working towards the preservation of the rural society in Bothwell.

The optional day was taken up by many conference delegates and we were ferries north to the village of Ross where we stood on the spectacular bridge, regarding the scene of tranquillity and wonderful tamarisks. The noise of clicking cameras was probably the loudest thing the villagers had heard this decade and even Trisha Dixon and Joanne Morris had aching fingers by the time we reached the lovely Milford garden.

MENU

Fruit Juice
Countrystyle Soup with Homemade Bread

Cold Cuts of Lamb, Pressed Tongue and Meat Loaf served with an assortment of homemade
Pickles and Chutneys
Savoury Meat Pie
Salads in Season

Pears in Port Wine Jelly
Scones with Jam and Cream and Honey
Tea/Coffee

An enviable menu – Sunday lunch at Bothwell

Clarendon was looking its mellow best with a welcoming party from the National Trust waiting for us at the top of the sweeping stairs and making us feel like minor royalty at least. The amazing Ericvale garden, with its standardised plants and topiary, inspired anyone who wields secateurs. Our final visit took us to the Owl Cottage garden which will grow into a scene of spectacular beauty in years to come.

Bouquets must go to Fairie Nielsen and the Tasmanian Branch for their splendid organisation of this complex and enjoyable event. There were no hiccups, apart from those after the Mercury cider, and everyone had a wonderful time. Victorian Branch be warned, you've got a lot to live up to next year.

Nicola Downer
South Australia

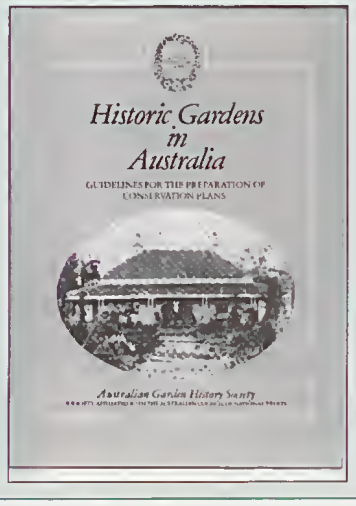
Ethne Clarke displays hereditary good taste at Hamilton, in this case in her choice of bonnets, to Lester Tropman, Ann Cripps and Peter Cripps

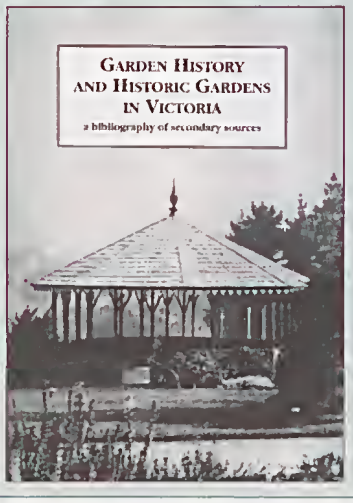
Australian Garden History Society Publications

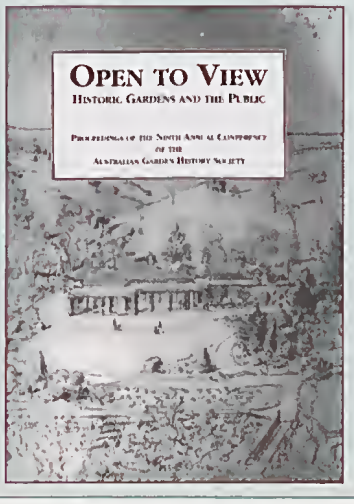
Historic Gardens in Australia: Guidelines for the preparation of conservation plans by Chris Betteridge and Howard Tanner, 1983. Limited stocks of this title are still available for $10 (includes postage) from the AGHS, c/– Royal Botanic Gardens, Birdwood Avenue, Victoria, 3141.

Garden History and Historic Gardens in Victoria: A bibliography of secondary sources, just published by the Victorian Branch. Lists over 300 books, reports and journal articles; essential reference work for students and researchers. $5 (postage paid) from AGHS Office.

Open to View: Historic Gardens and the Public, proceedings of the ninth annual conference of the Australian Garden History Society (1988). Includes articles by Paul Fox, Peter Watts, James Hitchmough, John Foster and John Sales. $10 (postage paid) from AGHS Office.







Calendar of Events

NOVEMBER

WEST AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Sunday 7
  Guided Tour of Narrows Interchange Park. Commentary by its designer John Oldham
- Saturday 27 & Sunday 28
  Country Gardens Tour – Pinjarra/Waroona (Combined with Heritage Rose Society)

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Wednesday 3
  Dr Christopher Ridgway (U.K.) will speak on the history of the landscape at Castle Howard, Yorks. U.K. (setting for Brideshead Revisited). **Time:** 6.30 pm. **Venue:** Radio Theatre, RMIT Building 9, cnr Bowen Lane and Franklin Street City. **Bookings:** essential. **Cost:** Members $7, Guests $10. **Enquiries:** National. Office Ph. 650 5043
- Saturday 6 and Sunday 7
  Cathedral Ranges Gardens and natural landscape with Rodger and Gwen Elliot. **Cost:** Members $70, Guests $85. **Information and Booking Form:** from National Office Ph. 650 5043.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Saturday 13
  Newmans Nursery Picnic Day: Join staff and customers on a walk to the old Nursery in Austley Park Reserve. **No Fee. Bookings** are appreciated. **Contact:** Newman's Nursery (08) 264 2661. Bring Picnic Lunch.

DECEMBER 1993

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/ SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Saturday 4
  Dinner at Rotherwood with Trisha Dixon
  Historic Rotherwood at Sutton Forest, home of Ann Sinnett, will be the venue of this special dinner where author and landscape photographer, Trisha Dixon will talk and show her slides of the Tasmanian conference. If you missed the conference don't miss this night! **Cost:** $35 per person. **Contact:** (048) 789 146.

SYDNEY AND NORTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Sunday 5
  The Branch invites members family and friends to a BYO picnic and Christmas Party. Please come and meet your newly elected executive committee and take the opportunity at this informal get-together to share your hopes and expectations of future directions/activities for our branch. **Venue** Cremorne Park, Milson Road, Cremorne. **Time** 4.30 pm

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Monday 6
  BYO picnic followed by a talk at 8.00 pm. **Hampers:** to order from National Office. **Time:** From 6.00 pm. **Venue:** Herbarium Lawn. **Cost:** Members free, Guests $5.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH

- Friday 3
  Christmas Drinks at Walnut Hill, 5 Walker Street Stirling, the Garden of Mr Trevor Nottle. **Time:** 6.00pm.

JANUARY

VICTORIAN BRANCH

- Wednesday 26-Sunday 30
  Kosciusko National Park walking tour with Rodger and Gwen Elliot, staying at the Chalet at Charlotte Pass. **For further information** contact the National Office ph. (03) 650 5043.

MARCH

SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS/ SOUTHERN NSW BRANCH

- Saturday 19
  The day will take the form of a lecture by John Brookes, famous English landscape designer and author, followed by lunch and then visits to some interesting gardens in the district.

Letter

Mile End
South Australia 5031

For some time now I have thought that members may find it interesting to know the origin of the photographs on our membership brochure which I believe were all taken at Belmont at Beaufort, Victoria late last century or early this century? Perhaps the Victorian Branch could give us some insight as to what areas of the garden the photos were taken and any other historic details that may be of interest.

Richard Nolan

JULIE KEEGAN
GARDEN LOVERS TOURS

Julie Keegan will introduce you to beautiful gardens, historic houses and delicious local food and wine.

1994 Programmes

April/May	**South of France, Tuscany and Italian Lakes**
May	**Tuscany and Provence**
May/June	**Portugal, Spain and England**
November	**Tasmania**

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Sydney 2030
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Fax: (02) 337 6782

FOR RESERVATION
TRICIA JOHN
WENTWORTH TRAVEL
203/233 New South Head Road
Edgecliff 2027
Tel: (02) 327 4699
Licence No. 2TA001726

Trisha Dixon

Above: *A fine example of a Tasmanian stone cottage softened by cottage garden plants in the village of Ross*
Below: *The imposing classical facade of Clarendon at Evandale, one of the many places visited by on the tour following the Tasmanian conference*

Trisha Dixon

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